

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EUR-10 NSCE-00 NSC-10 INR-09

CIAE-00 NSAE-00 PRS-01 OMB-01 USIA-04 RSR-01 RSC-01

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R 120733 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8758

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2993

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PK

SUDV: PRES. BHUTTO ELATED OVER PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION:
NEXT STEPS

REF: ISLAMABAD 2906

1. SUMMARY: BHUTTO IS ELATED OVER UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF
CONSTITUTION WITH PARTICIPATION OF BULK OF POLITICAL
OPPOSITION. HIS PLANNING CALLS FOR NEW NATIONAL AND
PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.
END SUMMARY.

2. PRES BHUTTO ASKED ME ON SHORT NOTICE TO COME SEE
HIM AFTERNOON APRIL 11 AT PRESIDENT' S HOUSE IN MURREE.
I WAS RECEIVED BY PRES AND BEGUM BHUTTO, BOTH OF WHOM
HAD JUST COPTERED IN FROM RAWALPINDI. BHUTTO APPEARED
A BIT WEARY BUT COMPOSED AND MOST OF ALL ELATED OVER
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THE UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION BY ASSEMBLY THE PREVINPEFYEJISJVMN (REFTEL). (I MUST CORRECT STATEMENT IN PARA 6 REFTEL THAT A FEW PERSONS HAD VOTED AGAINST CONSTITUTION. FACT IS THAT NOORANI AND PERHAPS THREE OTHERS REMAINED IN THEIR SEATS WHEN ALL OTHERS PRESENT ROSE IN FAVOR OF CONSTITUTION. I AM INFORMED THAT FAILURE OF FORMER TO RAISE VOICES IN OPPOSITION DID NOT CONSTITUTE VOTE AGAINST AND THEY ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE ABSTAINED. VOTE OF 125 FOR CONSTITUTION IS THEREFORE CONSIDERED AS HAVING BEEN UNANIMOUS.)

3. BHUTTO SAID HE HAD ASKED ME TO COME UP TO MURREE TO HELP MARK THE VERY HAPPY EVENT OF CONSTITUTION' S ENACTMENT. HE THEN SAID SOME NICE WORDS ABOUT SYMPATHY I HAD SHOWN FOR PAKISTAN' S PROBLEMS IN THIS AND OTHER INSTANCES, I RESPONDED THAT I REJOICED IN THE JOY OF PAKISTANI PEOPLE OVER PASSAGE OF THEIR FIRST CONSTITUTION VOTED BY THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, AND WAS SURE THAT IN THIS REPRESENTED ALSO VIEWS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE.

4. I SAID THAT THE VOTE FOR CONSTITUTION WAS TRIBUTE TO GOOD SENSE OF MODERATE ELEMENTS THROUGHOUT PAK BODY POLITIC AND, NOT LEAST, TO BHUTTO' S SKILL AND CONCILIATORY LEADERSHIP.

5. BHUTTO NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE PRESIDING IN RAWALPINDI APRIL 12 OVER " AUTHENTICATION" OF CONSTITUTION. HE HAD NOT KNOWN UNTIL WALI KHAN (NAP LEADER) ACTUALLY STOOD UP IN SUPPORT WHETHER HE WOULD BACK CONSTITUTION WHEN FINAL VOTE WAS CALLED ASSEMBLY PREVIOUS DAY. NOW HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT WALI AND THE OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS WHO HAD VOTED " FOR" WOULD PARTICIPATE IN FORMAL SIGNING APRIL 12 PRIOR TO BHUTTO' S AUTHENTICATION.

6. I ASKED WHAT HIS NEXT STEPS MIGHT BE. NOTING THAT GOVERNMENTS REMAINED TO BE FORMED IN NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN, I SAID I HAD IMPRESSION THAT NAP/ JUI COALITION WAS STILL ANXIOUS TO RE- FORM GOVERNMENTS IN THOSE PROVINCES, PERHAPS IN COOPERATION WITH PPP. BHUTTO SIDE- STEPPED THAT PARTICULAR ISSUE. HE REFERRED TO CONTINUING HISTORIC DIFFICULTIES AMONG VARIOUS BALUCH TRIBES WHICH MADE IT CONFIDENTIAL

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DIFFICULT TO GET WIDE COOPERATION. BALUCH GOVERNOR

BUGTI WOULD BE SEEING HIM LATER IN DAY AND THEY WOULD BE DISCUSSING MATTER. (FROM HIS FAILURE MAKE ANY SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO NWFP, I INFERRED THAT BHUTTO MAY SEE LESS OF A PROBLEM TO FORM A PPP- CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT IN NWFP THAN IN BALUCHISTAN; I ALSO INFERRED THAT BHUTTO PROBABLY DID NOT FAVOR COALITION WITH NAP/ JUI IN EITHER PROVINCE. THIS MAY VERY WELL DEVELOP INTO THE COUNTRY' S MOST SERIOUS IMMEDIATE POLITICAL PROBLEM NOW THAT THE CONSTITUTION HAS BEEN PASSED.)

7. I SAID I PRESUMED THERE WAS NO NEED NOW FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM WHICH BHUTTO INTENDED TO CALL WHEN IT APPEARED OPPOSITION BOYCOTT WOULD CONTINUE THROUGH FINAL VOTE ON CONSTITUTION. HE SAID THAT WAS RIGHT. HE WANTED TO TELL ME IN CONFIDENCE THAT HE WAS NOW THINKING OF HOLDING " SNAP ELECTIONS." HE THOUGHT THESE MIGHT BEST COME IN AUGUST. THEY WOULD BE FOR BOTH NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES; AND ELECTIONS WOULD BE ON SAME DAY. HE WAS NOT IN FAVOR OF UNDULY PROLONGED ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND DID NOT INTEND TO ANNOUNCE DECISION RE ELECTIONS UNTIL PERHAPS ONE- TWO MONTHS BEFORE DATE THAT WOULD BE SET FOR THEM. HE SAW THESE ELECTIONS, LONG BEFORE CURRENT GOVERNMENT HAD TO SUBJECT ITSELF TO NEW MANDATE, A ANOTHER MAJOR STEP TO SET COUNTRY ON THE TRACK OF STABLE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM.

8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PREDOMINANT NATIONAL MOOD SEEMS TO BE ELATION OVER PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION POLITICAL VICISSITUDES OF PAST YEARS MILITATE AGAINST PREMATURE OPTIMISM. RECENT BITTERNESS HAS LEFT SEEDS OF TROUBLES WHICH COULD RECUR SOON OVER FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENTS IN BALUCHISTAN AND NWFP. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN TO WHAT EXTENT THESE POSSIBLE TROUBLES MAY BE MITIGATED BY BHUTTO' S PLAN TO HOLD FAIRLY EARLY ELECTIONS. SOBER

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